**Factsheet**

**Attracting and retaining sponsors**

**Step 3 – Update your sponsorship packages**

## Creating value for sponsors

**Valuing sponsorship**

To understand how to create the most effective sponsorship packages consider the major factors which add value to sponsors. From a commercial perspective there are three key components to valuing your sponsorship packages:

1. How big is your Club’s audience or community?
2. What is your Club’s ability to engage its audience?
3. What is your Club’s ability to influence the behaviour of its audience or community?

Many people, do not sponsor Football Clubs only for commercial reasons so it is important to consider two additional points:

1. What does the sponsor value or what are they seeking from your Club? (For example, is it social, networking or community inclusion opportunities?)
2. What is the sponsor willing and able to pay for the sponsorship package?

**How big is your Club’s audience?**

Many Clubs underestimate the size of their audience/community. Often Clubs only refer to the number of members and players, yet their community or audience is much larger. From a sponsorship perspective it includes everybody a Club engages with no matter how that engagement occurs. A Club’s audience may include;

* Members/Players;
* Those participating in Club activities;
* The friends and families of the players;
* Past members, players and their friends and family;
* Social media followers;
* Club databases (players, members, supporters, sponsors, past players etc);
* Spectators;
* Users of the Club’s facilities (for example those who hire or access the Club’s facilities);
* Website visitors;
* Email newsletter subscribers;
* Club Apps (E.g. Team App);
* The local/broader community (Geographic).

From a sponsorship perspective the bigger your Club’s audience the better, so one of the goals of your Club’s communication should be to continually grow the Club’s audience and its ability to influence its behaviour.

**What is your Club’s ability to engage its audience?**

Once you have determined the size of your audience the next step is to identify in what ways your Club engages or communicates with its audience and how often. From a sponsorship perspective, the more often your Club is able to promote the sponsors message the better.

**Branding Opportunities**

Through co-branding we can promote how often our community is exposed to the sponsor’s brand. This can be through;

Branding within the Club rooms:

* Trophies named after the sponsor
* Trophy cabinets
* Prize/honour boards
* Bar mats
* Coasters
* Table centre displays
* Back-of-toilet- door displays
* Signage barriers

On the field:

* Post padding
* Ground signage
* Scoring board
* Seating sections
* Car parking sections (e.g. you are parked in the Electricity Wizard Lot)
* On equipment

On our Players:

* On Training jerseys
* On Match Jerseys, shorts/hats/helmets/socks

On Club merchandise:

* Hats
* Casual clothing (jumpers, shirts etc.)
* Ticket sales (sponsor's names across ticket)

Within Social Media platforms:

* Facebook/twitter/Instagram recognition - posts, photos
* Recognition on social media banners
* Website space (top right-hand corner)
* Newsletter advertising:
  + feature article
  + recognition

**Create opportunities for the sponsor to visit your Club**

The idea is to bring your sponsor directly to your members and the Club’s broader audience. This can be invaluable for businesses as it provides an opportunity to grow a relationship with your Club’s audience in person. By building positive relationships, businesses can ‘get ahead of the competition’. Relationships and trust are a big part of the equation when it comes to influencing behaviour and buying decisions.

The Club can create opportunities for the sponsor to visit the Club and offer their products and services directly to the Club members and players. If these visits are promoted well they could create real value, for example if the local:

* Sports store sponsors the Club then they may visit during the preseason and fit and sell new boots to the players;
* Coffee shop is a sponsor they could be offered a stall on match day to sell coffee and cakes etc. to crowd;
* Dentist could come and fit mouth guards to the junior players;
* Car dealership could display cars on match day;
* It is important to identify all members of your community. A Mother’s Day luncheon is a great event. If your Club does this then Women’s fashion shops, shoe shops and jewellers and similar types of sponsors could all invited to attend; and,
* Showcase their products and services.

With a little creative thinking, opportunities and events could be created which could showcase your sponsors to your community, adding value both to your events and to the sponsors themselves.

**Take your audience to your sponsor**

A great way to increase the value of your Club sponsorship packages is to take your members and supporters to the sponsor. For example, if you have a sponsor that is a pub, restaurant, cinema or gym, rather than just simply encouraging your members to attend in their own time, your Club could organise an event at the sponsor’s venue. This could be an auction night, presentation night, formal cocktail party or even a weekly social event.

This creates opportunities for these businesses to generate extra income, show off their venues and most importantly, develop relationships with your members.

A common example is taking members to a local restaurant for an event, such as a fundraising event or awards night. This could be held during a quiet business period or even when the venue is normally shut. This is great for the venue because apart from generating revenue when they are normally closed, they also introduce a whole new audience to their restaurant menu and build ongoing relationships with the Club’s members. Hopefully your Club members will return over and over again.

To encourage members to return the restaurant could offer a special offer for their next visit or even ongoing discounts.

In terms of gyms, your Club could hold pre-season sessions at the local gym. This brings many of your members to the gym and allows your sponsor to build relationships with your members over a number of weeks. This relationship builds the foundation for gym staff to promote and sell their memberships, products and services. Again, the gym should create a special offer for your members to entice them to become members of the gym.

Including sponsor visits in your sponsorship marketing strategy is a very powerful way of promoting and generating real value for your Club sponsors, while at the same time increasing the enjoyment, and in the case of the gym hopefully the on field performance of your Club.

* Ask sponsor to host an event to show case their products;
* Ask a sponsor to start the game;
* To present the trophies at the end of the game/season;
* Schedule a match day;
* Hold a Club function at the sponsors place of business;
* Offer members rewards when they use your local sponsor to purchase goods (e.g. members loyalty card for coffee).

## Using websites, email newsletters and social media to promote your sponsors

**Create a *call to action***

Many Clubs already promote their sponsors on their websites, social media and email newsletters. In order to maximise the effectiveness of this advertising or promotion we have to create a reason for our audience to leave our Club website, email newsletter or social media and go to the sponsor’s website. Generally, Clubs use a sponsor’s logo on their website, email newsletter or social media. While using a logo reminds your community of the sponsor it is unlikely to encourage visitors to click on the logo to be taken to the sponsor’s website.

To maximise the value to sponsors all website, email newsletter or social media advertisements should also have a *call to action* or a reason to encourage people to click on the link to the sponsor’s website. There are many types of effective calls to action which can be included on your sponsors logos such as ‘buy one get one free’ or “free quote”. Work with your sponsors to create offers and reasons for your audience to go to the sponsor’s website, a logo alone is not enough. Making the offer relevant to your community is a good start, use football language to relate the goods and services provided by the sponsor directly back to the Club.

Click here for examples of Calls to Action

**Club Websites**

Often Football Clubs have a very large number of people visiting their Club website for information, thus making it an ideal location to actively promote Club sponsors. While having a page dedicated to Club sponsors looks great these types of pages attract few visitors and rarely create value for the sponsor. To maximise the value of your website to sponsors their logos and calls to action must be placed in on the website in the areas of the highest traffic. An effective way of promoting your sponsors is to place their advertising in the middle of the articles not just around the border of webpage where advertising has traditionally been located.

**e-newsletters**

Even in the world of social media, e-newsletters are still the most effective way to proactively communicate with a large audience of Club supporters who may be spread all around the world.

E-newsletters can be created quickly and easily using an e-newsletter application. Your membership platform may have this functionality but if not there are many great email platforms such as www.mailchimp.com, www.campaignmonitor.com or [www.aweber.com](http://www.aweber.com).

Many football Clubs are now sending e-newsletter’s throughout the season. e-newsletters are not only a great way to share news regularly with your audience (for example team selections, match results, best players or upcoming social and fundraising events) but they are great way to promote your sponsors, their products and services, directly to your audience. Regular e-newsletters allow your Club to regularly promote sponsors while building a very strong sense of belonging between the Club and the individual.

**Social Media**

Most Clubs are taking advantage of social media to communicate to directly their Club’s audience. Social media can be used to promote Club sponsors but again to maximise the value make sure that the promotion has a very strong call to action which attracts the person to the sponsors products or services.

**Live streaming**

The rapid improvement of technology now allows Clubs to not only record their matches but live stream or broadcast them directly to their audience.

Many different social media platforms, for example Facebook Live or Periscope now allow Club’s to broadcast Club games, training, social and fundraising activities live to their audience, using nothing more than a mobile phone. It is very easy to promote sponsors throughout video recordings and live streaming of Club games, activities and events.

## Creative ideas

**Referral commissions**

As a part of many sponsorships, Clubs referring players, members and supporters to sponsors creating direct product sales (as in the examples above) are now receiving funding for their Club based on the numbers of sales made. It is now becoming increasingly common for the following business types to pay referral fees:

* A Real Estate Agent will pay a referral fee for every house sold that has been referred to them by Club members, players or supporters;
* Car dealers are paying referral fees for cars sold to or through members, players and supporters;
* Some Banks are now offering commissions for sales of home loans and other banking products referred by Club players, members and supporters.

Again with a little creative thinking, if your Club is creating real sales for your sponsors, incorporating a referral commission system may become very effective way of measuring and creating sponsorship value.

**Using membership cards as coupons**

Sponsor can add value to your Club by allowing players and members to receive a discount with the sponsors business on presentation of their membership card. While the Club may not get access to this information the sponsors will get a feel for the number of Club members purchasing their products and services.

## Creating your sponsorship proposal

Providing members and players with simple and effective sponsorship information and proposal templates is imperative for players and members to be able to approach potential sponsors on

behalf of your Club.

The sponsorship proposal template and supporting information should contain enough information about the Club, its activities and the size of its audience, for the sponsor to make the decision to sponsor the Club.

Integral information includes:

* A summary of the Club’s activities and numbers of participants;
* Club history and achievements;
* Future plans and goals;
* President's message;
* Sponsorship options (e.g. gold, silver, bronze and player sponsorship options);
* Key Club contact details;
* Information about the Club’s audience;
* Membership and supporter numbers and details;
* Social media follows;
* Website visitors each month;
* Crowd size of games;
* Number of subscribers to the Club’s email newsletters;
* Attendees at the Club social and fundraising events;
* Contact details of the Club.

Once you have created your sponsorship proposal template ensure it is added to the Club website so that players and members can easily access it at any time. Then it can be constantly referred to in Club communication such as e-newsletters, social media and even other pages of the website.

**Using video to enhance your proposal**

Today, it is now very easy to create simple but high quality videos, using nothing more than the video recording features of a smart phone. Video is an extremely engaging and emotive form of communication and a very effective way to attract new sponsors to your Club and can be used as a centrepiece on your Club website, e-newsletters and social media.

Many football Clubs are now creating videos that highlight the Club’s identity, and what it means to be involved with the Club. Signposting what the sponsorship funds will be used for and most importantly includes a personal invitation to become part of the Club.

Videos are a great way to illustrate the benefits of becoming a Club sponsor. For example, if the sponsorship package includes naming rights to the scoreboard then shooting the video while a match is being played will allow you to demonstrate how many people will see the sponsor’s brand on the scoreboard during a game. Or if the sponsorship includes branding on players jumpers then you can not only visually demonstrate what this could look like but again highlight how many people on match day would see the sponsor’s brand.

It is easier to create an emotional connection with a potential sponsor using a well thought out video message than it is with an email.

**Sponsorship Agreements**

It is important that both the Club and sponsor/s have a very clear and identical understanding of exactly what benefits are included in the sponsorship as well as:

* Objectives of both the Club and sponsor;
* Responsibilities of both Club and sponsor;
* When funds are due to be paid;
* Exactly what benefits, such as memberships or tickets to Club events, and sponsorship inclusions the Club will provide to the sponsor;
* What marketing the Club will undertake to promote the sponsor;
* What reporting, if any, the Club will provide to the sponsor.

It is important that this information is documented and provided to both the sponsor and the Club prior to the sponsorship commencing. This information should be included on the Club website and in the sponsorship proposal. This confirms both the role of the sponsor and the Football Club in this commercial relationship.